



The Weekly Page

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 3

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Pages Learn About Legislature



Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: **governing society is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day.** As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Pages write bills, hold mock hearings

Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. Criteria for making a legislative solution work was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Some topics for policy bills included plastic bag pollution, abortion restrictions, safety of law officers, cyberbullying, and elderly drivers. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A

“DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Reps fired up about marijuana bill

Olympia – House Bill 1010 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Matt Brennan and Luke Munizza. “This bill addresses the issue of drug use in our state and will legalize marijuana,” said Rep. Brennan. Currently 47% of drug arrests are for marijuana and our prisons are overflowing with non-violent drug offenders, according to the legislators.

“Research from the Drug Enforcement Administration shows that marijuana is far safer than many foods we commonly consume,” said Rep. Munizza. If this bill becomes law, marijuana will be sold in independent drug dispensaries that are regulated by the state, and a 10 percent tax will be added, which will help reduce the budget deficit.



Oppong calls all for stricter standards for high school athletes

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Samuel Oppong introduced House Bill 2010, which addresses the issue of high school athletic standards. “The bill is a good one because it will encourage athletes to stay more focused in school so that they can graduate on time,” said Rep. Oppong. High school athletes at some schools are not “on pace” to graduate, yet they are still allowed to play. School districts like Federal Way and Clover Park have a 2.0 GPA to be eligible to play, but some other districts have even higher requirements. “There is no consistent standard across districts,” said Rep. Oppong. If this bill becomes law, public high school athletes will have to maintain a 3.6 GPA or higher to play and they must be on schedule to graduate.



ID required for social network sites

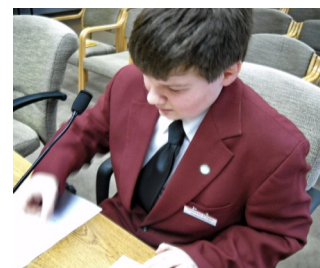
Olympia – Senate Bill 5200 was introduced yesterday by Senators Nhaomi Rogers and Lindsey Rieck. “This bill addresses the issue of cyberbullying and will require identification before an online account on a social networking site is created,” said Sen. Rogers. Cyberbullying is the term used when a child, preteen, or teen is threatened, tormented, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet. “It is becoming more common and can have serious conse-



quences. In one case, a 13 year old, Megan Meier, was driven to suicide by a cyberbullying incident. According to a recent survey, 42% of kids have been bullied while online,” said Sen. Rieck. The senators’ idea is that all Washington State residents will have to provide identification before opening an online social networking account. “This will reduce the number of fake accounts that are set up to harass others,” said Sen. Rogers.

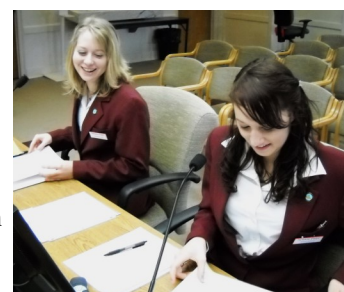
Smoking pleasure now, pay now!

Olympia – Senate Bill 6263 was introduced yesterday by Senator Benjamin Howard. “This bill addresses the issue of smokers who subscribe to the State’s Basic Health insurance plan and will help pay for the extra money the State pays for tobacco-caused diseases,” said Sen. Howard. If this bill becomes law, tobacco users will be required to pay 15 percent more for their state health insurance premiums. “Since smoking causes coronary heart disease, the leading killer of Americans, why should healthier people on the insurance plan have to pay for people who want to kill themselves,” he said.



Senators want to reduce teen pregnancy

Olympia – Senate Bill 5115 was introduced yesterday by Senators Abby Jackson and Savannah Vatter. “This bill addresses the issue of teen pregnancy and will provide education to reduce the numbers in our state,” said Sen. Jackson. The bill requires health education classes to teach pregnancy prevention for at least two days each year in grades 8-12. “Teens 15-17 have a one in 20 chance of becoming pregnant. Although Washington teen pregnancy rates are not the highest in the United States, it is still a very distressing problem in our community,” said Sen. Vatter.



Academics before athletics

Olympia – Senate Bill 5967 was introduced yesterday by Senator Hannah Johnsrud. “This bill addresses the issue of high school athletic academic requirements and will raise grade standards and increase graduation rates,” said Sen. Johnsrud. This bill will require all athletes in public high schools to pass at least six out of seven or eight classes a day with a grade of at least 70 percent (C average). It will also put athletes through academic checks every three weeks to make sure they are on track. “Although this may create more paperwork for school employees, it will be worth it for our players. There have been similar bills passed in Texas and Oregon that have greatly enhanced the athletic programs as well as academic programs. Sports are a privilege, and should be treated as such,” said Sen. Johnsrud.



Offenders soon to be ‘in the pink’?

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Zachary Placzek and Jessica Placzek. “This bill addresses the issue of recidivism in our prisons, and will discourage criminals from returning to jail, EVER,” said Rep. Zachary Placzek. Evidence shows that over half of criminals who get out of jail are back within three years. “This bill would make criminals so uncomfortable in jail that they won’t want to come back,” said Rep. Jessica Placzek. The prisoners would wear hot pink jumpsuits and slippers during the day and



would sleep in pink sheets at night. The walls and bars of the prison would be pink, as would the towels they use. Sound silly? Evidence shows it works, according to the representatives. “Sheriff Low, of Mason County, Texas, did this very thing. Crime in that county has gone down 70 percent since the jail has gone pink!” said Rep. Zachary Placzek.

New bill subtracts additives

Olympia – House Bill 3420 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Morgan Forde and Kelci Holten. “This bill addresses the issue of harmful additives in our foods,” said Rep. Forde. The bill most directly targets aspartame and high-fructose corn syrup, two additives that are ex-



tremely prevalent and proven to be unhealthy. Aspartame, an additive common in diet drinks and chewing gum, has been shown to result in mental retardation when consumed in great levels and has also been suggested to cause altered brain functions and behavioral changes in consumers. In addition, high fructose corn syrup potentially raises the risk for heart disease and diabetes, as well as encouraging overeating and sending heart-threatening triglycerides into the bloodstream. “In time, we hope to regulate or ban all dangerous and unnecessary additives,” said Rep. Holten. “Until then, Forde and I are including in our bill a plan to educate people about the dangers of additives.” The representatives hope the bill will be passed out of the Health and Wellness Committee during its next executive session.

While adults smoke, children choke

Olympia – Senate Bill 6439 was introduced yesterday by Senators Darcy Stamper and Victoria Popp. “This bill addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in cars with children as passengers and will prohibit the smoking of a cigar, pipe, or cigarette in those situations,” said Sen. Popp. “This bill will protect our children and help decrease illness like lung and heart disease and asthma,” said Sen. Stamper. According to the senators’ research, there are eleven hidden toxins in cigarettes that children are stuck inhaling. “Somebody should protect the innocent children if their parents aren’t going to!” said Sen. Stamper.





Bill pushes back high school start times

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Kaustubh Deo and Jordan Nylander introduced House Bill 3999, which addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and early high school start times. “The bill is a good one because it will increase teen learning in a way that agrees with their bodies,” said Rep. Deo. This bill calls for all public high schools to start no earlier than 9 a.m. Studies have found that a teenager’s natural body clock doesn’t allow him or her to fall asleep until later at night, around 11 p.m. or midnight). So, teens cannot wake up easily early in the morning. When students have to wake up too early, they become sleep deprived. “We send our teens to school to learn and achieve their potential. But their bodies are crying out against the ridiculous times most high schools start. We’re going to fix that,” asserted Rep. Nylander. In districts with later start times, teachers found that students finished their homework faster when they had a full night of sleep and were more alert in class. The bill was heard by the House education committee.



Everyone has a right to privacy

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Kendra Horton introduced Senate Bill 5678, which addresses the issue of student privacy. “The legislature needs to protect students’ Fourth amendment rights from unreasonable searches and seizures, which are not being protected during school hours,” said Sen. Horton. A case in Arizona of a 13-year-old girl being strip-searched by an administrator and another



on the East Coast of a class of choir students being forced to take a drug test point to abuses of constitution rights in schools, according to the senator. “We want to make sure nothing like this happens in our schools,” said Sen. Horton. This bill bans public school administrators from unjust searches of students. It would require warrants before searches are conducted.

A cleaner, better Washington

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Jennifer Martin and Luke Peterson introduced Senate Bill 7777, which addresses the use of plastic grocery bags. “The bill is a good one because it stimulates the economy, reduces waste and provides more jobs in Washington,” said Sen. Martin. The new legislation will tax all plastic shopping bags and encourage recycling. “Hopefully, no one will want to continue paying the tax and they will be motivated to use paper bags and reusable shopping bags. It’s just good for the environment,” said Sen. Peterson.



Bill grows economy, shrinks waistlines

Olympia – Senate Bill 6789 was introduced yesterday by Senators Audrey Ramsden and Boyd Wolking. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will reduce the high rates within our state, as well as boost local and state agricultural economies,” said Sen. Wolking. During the 2003-2004 school year, 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2 through 19 were overweight, and \$1.3 billion was spent to treat obesity in adults. The senators hope that providing nutrition courses, as well as bringing in fresher food from local sources will teach healthy living at an early age, decrease childhood obesity, produce more revenue for local growers, and reduce pollution caused by food transportation vehicles. “Over 40 percent of Washington public school children receive free or reduced cost school meals. For some children, school meals are the only ones they receive that day. We don’t want those meals to be unhealthy ones. Not only will buying from local growers benefit Washington’s agricultural economy, but it will also reduce pollutants caused by the trucks that bring in food products from farther away,” said Sen. Ramsden.



Senators say quality trumps quantity in schools

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Devon Grove and Lester Guske III introduced Senate Bill 7909, which addresses the issue of sleep deprived students and early start times for public high schools. “The bill is a good one because it will address the issue of students coming to school too tired to learn,” said Sen. Grove. The bill would switch start and end times between high schools and elementary schools to preserve existing bus schedules. All high schools would start at 8:45 a.m. and end at 3:15 p.m. Although this would shorten the school day by 45 minutes, the senators argue that this would not harm student learning because efficiency would be increased.



Health classes to include abortion info

Olympia – Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Senators Katelynn Pantle and Jillian Andrews. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion awareness and will ensure a more informed decision by young girls contemplating this procedure,” said Sen. Pantle.



According to the senators, the bill will create a program that teaches potential moms about common outcomes of abortions, such as coping with

depression, guilt and regret, as well as medical problems such as cysts, scar tissue, and sexual dysfunction. “The bill doesn’t aim to dissuade a woman from getting an abortions, but just to show her what the possible outcomes could be in the future,” said Sen. Andrews.

Elderly drivers: a danger on highways

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Jullian Haley introduced Senate Bill 7891, which addresses the issue of elderly drivers. “The bill is a good one because it will stop the injuries and fatalities caused by senior citizens on our highways,” said Sen. Haley. The bill will require yearly eye and hearing exams for drivers 65 and older. Doctors will also be required to send the medical records to the DMV so they can decide whether an elderly person is fit to drive.

Abortion education mandated by House

Olympia – House Bill 1187 was introduced yesterday by Representative Melissa Filimonov and Audrey Dasef. “This bill addresses the issue of teenage abortion and will reduce the rate in Washington,” said Rep. Filimonov. This bill will add a health class that includes information on abortions as a graduation requirement. “Through education and knowledge we hope that the annual number of abortions will decrease from the 4,291 abortions performed in 2008 on 15- to 19-year-olds in our state,” said Rep. Dasef.



Legislators review public safety issue

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Matthew Doehle introduced House Bill 1797, which addresses the issue of the recent murders of law enforcement officers in the state. “The bill is a good one because it will help protect police officers,” said Rep. Doehle. The bill will authorize new equipment such as improved helmets and vests made with more bullet-resistant material. As old equipment wears out, the new gear will replace it. An increase in license plate fees by \$1 will help pay for the new equipment.



Dropout prevention tackled by senator

Olympia – Senate Bill 5019 was introduced yesterday by Senator Bianca Crenshaw. “This bill addresses the issue of the high



school dropout rate and will provide students with the help they need to stay in school,” said Sen. Crenshaw. This bill will establish a program for struggling students by providing volunteer tutors at least once a week to work

with students one-on-one. “This solution should help because students who have given up on their education and think that they can’t do it anymore will get the academic and personal support they need to succeed,” said Sen. Crenshaw.

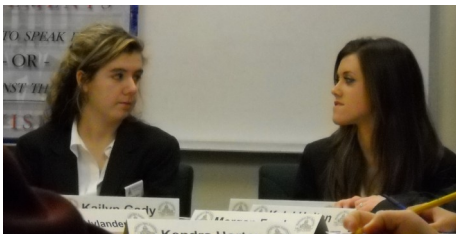
Guest speakers visit Page School

Adam Cooper, legislative assistant for Sen. Kohl-Welles; Rep. Sam Hunt (D-22); and Rep. Larry Springer (D-45) joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker's questions.



Police driving to distraction

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Shelby Nelson and Kailyn Gady introduced House Bill 3357, which addresses the issue of law enforcement safety measures. “The bill is a good



one because it will help keep the people in law enforcement safe while driving,” said Rep. Nelson. Officers use their cell phones and laptops many times

throughout the day. In Jacksonville, Florida, a police officer rear-ended a gasoline truck stopped at a railroad crossing, moments after using her laptop. This law would prohibit use of a cell phone or laptop by any police officer while driving a patrol car.

Page program over 100 years old

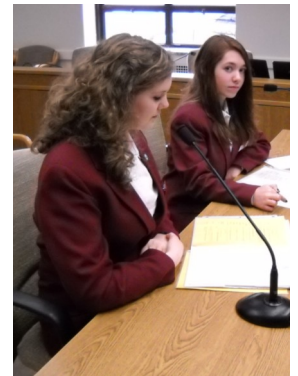
The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to



do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional.

Green is good!

Olympia—Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Grace Brennan and Marian Kvamme. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will result in a cleaner planet,” said Sen. Brennan. The bill will authorize a charge of 10 cents for every plastic bag used at a grocery or retail check-out stand. The senators hope this will encourage citizens to be more eco-friendly as well as save marine life and reduce litter. “Plastic bags have the potential to break down into petroleum-based plastic particles that contaminate soil and waterways and enter the food chain when animals accidentally ingest them. About 100,000 whales, seals, turtles and other marine animals are killed by plastic bags each year worldwide,” said Sen. Kvamme.



Page School on the web The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool> This newsletter has been posted there.

